



***St. Patrick
Catholic
School***

**Volunteer Handbook
2009-2010**

St. Patrick Catholic School
1501 Trotter Road
Largo, FL 33770
Phone: 727-581-4865

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September 2009

Welcome!

Volunteers have played, and will continue to play an important and valuable role as St. Patrick Catholic School. Students, teachers, staff, parents and the community benefit from the work of individuals like you who freely share their talents and resources with our school. Your help allows us to offer more programs and enhance our curriculum. Your help is essential in enhancing the education of our students. We also know that as a volunteer, you, too, will be rewarded.

We ask that you take a few minutes to read through this handbook. It is directed to volunteers, who are parents, grandparents, college or high school students, retired persons, former teachers and administrators, persons from the business and faith community, persons for every educational level – in short to anyone wishing to devote a portion of her or his time to one of the most important extensions of our faith. Because we want you to get the most out of your volunteer experience, we want to make sure you are an informed volunteer and are familiar with our policies and procedures. If you have any questions regarding these policies, procedures, or your own volunteer service, please feel free to call one of the volunteer coordinators listed in this handbook.

Whatever you can contribute – one hour a week, one day a week, one day a month, or just one day on a special project – your efforts make a difference for our students and community. Besides helping to build up the school, volunteers are teaching their youngsters the joys and obligations of stewardship. Our children learn from you that the donation of your precious time is a worthwhile cause!

I would like to send a great big thank you to the school volunteers and teachers who have contributed their ideas and suggestions to this handbook. I would also like to thank you in advance for your generosity. You will never regret a minute that you have spent in our school. With everyone working together, I know that St. Patrick Catholic School will be the best place for everyone in our community. May God bless you and your family for all the many things you do.

Yours in Christ,

Sr. Veronica Visceglia, SSND
Principal

Commitment

Whether you are volunteering on a regular basis or for a one-time project or event, arrive a little early so that there is time for communication and direction. Also, please be sure to let the teacher, librarian, or whomever is supervising your work as a volunteer know when your schedule changes or if you cannot make it when you are expected.

Teamwork

You are part of a team! Be a professional. As a school volunteer, you are a role model for students. Behave toward students and school staff in a respectful manner that sets the example of professionalism and good citizenship.

Communicate

As a school volunteer, it is crucial that the lines of communication stay open and clear. Please know that we believe that "No question is a dumb question." If you are unsure about what is expected or how to use certain office equipment, please ask someone for direction.

Dress Code

Wearing appropriate, practical, and comfortable clothing when you volunteer is one more way of being a positive role model. If you have a question, feel free to ask for a copy of the school's dress code or consult the school principal, a teacher, or another staff member or volunteer for assistance.

Who is doing the teaching?

If you are volunteering in a classroom, make sure you and the teacher are clear on your responsibilities and that you are both comfortable with your duties. The real value for a teacher of having a volunteer is that it frees the teacher to teach. If you find that you are spending more time prepping for activities than is satisfying to you, then talk with the teacher or person in charge about other ways that you can help.

Language

Just as we expect students to refrain from using inappropriate language while at school, we expect the same from teachers, staff and volunteers. Most adults realize how easily children pick up on what we say. Please keep in mind, what may be a harmless slang term to you, may come across as offensive to another adult or student.

Our commitment to you

While there are certain expectations from volunteers to help things run smoothly, we realize that you have expectations from our school staff as well. We are committed to working with you to make sure volunteering is rewarding for everyone.

A handbook like this is useful in covering information in a general manner. Volunteers, whether in specific programs such as our Enrichment Clubs, or as a volunteer in a certain classroom, need specific information about their volunteer duties. This can be accomplished by attending an orientation with other potential volunteers or by meeting individually with the member of the school staff that will be supervising you. For example, volunteers need to know where supplies are located, how to operate certain office equipment, as well as specific school practices. Once you have become an experienced volunteer, you may be asked to help with the orientation of new volunteers.

Efficiency

We respect your time commitment and will make every effort to utilize your time efficiently. If you have any questions or suggestions to help us, please share them.

We want to make the best match we can between volunteer opportunities and your interests and talents. Let school personnel or the volunteer coordinator know how you can best contribute. Any input may lead to the development of additional volunteer opportunities.

Discipline or Behavior Problems

As a school volunteer you may notice students disobeying school or classroom rules. Your responsibility is to call such matters to the attention of the teacher or other supervising school personnel. **Never take corrective measures into your own hands!**

Signing In

All volunteers are required to sign in at the school office before and after each shift. Signing in each time you volunteer also allows school personnel to contact you immediately in case of an emergency. Volunteers must wear a volunteer badge at all times while at school. For everyone's safety, it is important to know who you are and what your role is at our school.

Volunteers in the upper grades

Sometimes volunteers do not feel as needed or welcome by students or teachers in upper grade levels. Be assured, however that your presence and assistance is still welcome and needed. Volunteering with older students is just as important as in the early grades; it simply has to be adapted to the developmental and educational needs of the student.

What you hear or observe about students or staff while volunteering in a school is confidential. What is seemingly harmless comment repeated to another can be misunderstood and cause harm to the entire school team.

Screening and sign up

All prospective volunteers who will be volunteering on a regular basis need to complete a Volunteer Registration Form. All prospective volunteers will be screened through Primo Infosource. If a volunteer may or will have unsupervised access to a student or students he/she will be required to complete fingerprint cards through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. Each applicant must also complete the Volunteer Information Forms. These forms may request other information as needed. Each volunteer must meet with the principal, faculty member, or a volunteer coordinator before the application process is complete.

Volunteers are not allowed to provide transportation for students unless they have proper approval and have completed the required forms. Volunteers often assist as chaperones on school field trips.

Family Name: _____ Student(s) in grade(s) _____
Please indicate your preferences below so we can best match your availability and interest.

I am available to volunteer:

- Daily
- Weekly
- Every Other Week
- Monthly
- Occasionally

My available days are:

- Any Weekday
- Sunday
- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday
- Saturday

My available times are:

- Before School
- Morning
- Lunchtime
- Recess time
- Afternoon
- Evening
- Weekends

Areas of Interest:

I would be interested in the following areas (please check as many as you would like):

Classroom

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Coordinating special events | Field Trip Chaperone |
| Assisting in classroom | Assisting in Library |
| Assisting in Clinic | Assisting in Lunch Room |
| Assisting in Office | Tutoring |

Administrative:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Grant Applications | Alumni Development |
|--------------------|--------------------|

Home and School:

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Home Room Helper | Sports Coach |
| Enrichment Club Leader | |

Yes, I would like to help the school. Please accept my donations for _____ to pay for my screening fees.

Do you have another idea? Please list other areas of interest or talents you would be willing to share with our school on the back of this page.

Thank you for your support!